

Talking About Race

Racism is prevalent in our society and it impacts how children exist in and view the world around them. Children look to adults to understand how they should treat and perceive themselves and others. What we say and do matters. Use these research-based activities to start talking to children about race from an early age.

The Way You Are

Children are aware of race. In the first years of life, they begin to absorb ideas about themselves and others from people around them. Children reflect these ideas about race in their own attitudes and behaviors.

Talk with young children about how everyone is a little bit different. Everyone has their own experiences. It is important that children understand there is not only one right way to look, feel, or be.



Toothy Wonder

When you're brushing your child's teeth, look in the mirror together. Talk about how your faces are the same and different from theirs. For example, you have more teeth, and bigger teeth, but you both can make funny faces. Follow their lead and talk about what they notice.

Brainy Background

Comparing things that are the same and different will help your child sort their experiences into categories and make connections—skills that are important in reading, math, and science in the future. This also builds their connection with you!

Suggested Age 1 - 2 years

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Same and Different

On the go? Call your child's attention to the people you see. How are they the same or different? Do you see people with dark hair or light hair? Short or long hair? Share what you see, back and forth. Are they walking or riding? Carrying something or not?

Brainy Background

People watching is a great time to focus on details of how people look, what they're doing, and how they're the same and different. Does your child notice anything you missed? These are thinking skills that will help them understand the world.

Suggested Age 3 - 5 years

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Recognize Race

Talking about race in early childhood is important. These discussions help children form positive views about themselves and people of different races.

If children, especially white children, don't learn to recognize and talk about race, they are less able to identify inequities. They are also left to get their ideas about race from peers and society. Avoiding race also makes it an uncomfortable topic, which perpetuates divisions.

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